

**SPECIAL SESSION  
September 16, 2002**

The Board of Supervisors of Maricopa County, Arizona, convened at 9:00 a.m., September 16, 2002, in the Supervisor's Conference Room, Tenth Floor, 301 W. Jefferson, Phoenix, Arizona, with the following members present: Don Stapley, Chairman; Fulton Brock, Vice Chairman; Andy Kunasek (entered late), Max W. Wilson and Mary Rose Wilcox. Also present: Fran McCarroll, Clerk of the Board; Shirley Million, Executive Assistant; David Smith, County Administrative Officer; and Paul Golab, Deputy County Attorney.

**PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: TRANSPORTATION**

Item: Chief Public Works Officer review of proposals and strategies for regional transportation delivery. (ADM2000)

Tom Buick, Transportation Director, gave a slide presentation and distributed a corresponding handout reporting on the issue of providing leadership for a regional transportation system. He indicated that there is a void in the deployment, operations and maintenance of such a system within metropolitan areas statewide and showed a map he referred to as the "sea of red" on a slide depicting locally impacted areas. He remarked that unless remedial steps are taken residents will find the surface streets and freeways that are now in place reaching an increasingly congested state. He indicated that the key is "strategy – structure – execution" and said that only by executing the strategy based on the structure will anything be accomplished, because all three are necessary to bring resolution to the problem.

Mr. Buick explained that MCDOT has sponsored a regional transportation summit with local elected and appointed officials along with representatives from across the U.S. and Canada. The presenters represented municipalities and jurisdictions that have already wrestled with this problem, many having solved it satisfactorily. He said they heard a full spectrum of what the others did and how they accomplished it and have examples of their successes as well as of their mistakes. He indicated the County already has successes in smaller endeavors as a regional leader and cited Loop 303, Baseline and Gilbert Road Projects, 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue and the Aztec model as examples.

Discussion ensued on extending the half cent sales tax and the several different plans devised to allocate the monies, with suggestions from ADOT (Arizona Department of Transportation, RPTA (Regional Public Transportation Authority) and the City of Phoenix (Rimsza's Plan). He said that positioning is already underway to influence the vote with what was termed a parochial viewpoint. It has already been determined that the half cent sales tax will not supply enough money to complete the needs identified by ADOT and Phoenix (which total \$16 billion), let alone the rest of the state.

Mr. Buick said there are three options for the County to look at.

1. Going after our fair share.

The County currently has designs for:

- 1a Regional roads costing \$1.3 million – Gilbert Road, El Mirage and Loop 303. Much of this is in the West Valley off the 303.
- 1b Unfunded construction projects worth \$250 million.
- 1c Bridges that will be needed within 20 years, \$135 million. Maricopa County is the agency that builds the bridges for all jurisdictions.

2. True regional transportation district – Reconciliation of proposals.
  - 2a ADOT - \$12 billion  
Phoenix - \$4 billion  
ROTA – no estimate  
RRS - \$1.3 billion (Roads of Regional Significance) – including those bordering the freeways because when the freeway breaks down traffic spills out onto adjoining streets and roads.
  - 2b Plus two things that need to be considered in the regional debates – responsibility for the operation and maintenance of roads in the transportation system and the need of a centralized governing power operating with a broad overview of the region as a whole.
3. Demonstration of corridors.

Corridors would be similar to the Alameda Corridor in California where the legislature appointed a board to contract for construction of a corridor between sections of congested areas. Corridors are planned, completed and when the contractor is finished with the project the board dissolves.

Mike Sabatini, MCDOT, Planning, said that at some point in time we will need a Regional Transportation District as the variety of traffic laws in different jurisdictions become less tolerable to the masses. He said that towns don't communicate with each other and towns don't communicate with the County. He gave several examples of the problems caused by this lack of communications, such as a city approving a charter school on a major arterial, which is something the County would not have allowed. He explained that there are extreme instances when three or even four jurisdictions control the different corners of an intersection. He gave illustrations on the confusion and damage caused by the lack of communication and/or an effective approval process. In one instance where two jurisdictions controlled either side of a street, both approved businesses with heavy truck traffic and consequently the County-maintained roadway, having been constructed for a lesser traffic load, is being heavily damaged. Had the County been informed of the use prior to its approval a heavy-duty road would have been constructed. Another problem arises when the speed limits are different on either side of an intersection according to differing jurisdictional variation in traffic laws. He said there were many more similar instances where a central planning agency would have eliminated costly errors because communication and the decision-making process would be established in one place.

Discussion ensued on the different probable options and the way the tax monies would play-out in these options as well as the best possible means of addressing the needs of a responsible transportation system for the region. The impact of MAG recommendations for control, and the resentment against the County by all the municipalities was also discussed. This is apparently driving the focus of Phoenix and the other cities and towns towards getting the half-cent tax extended so the money will be available. How the money is allocated, and by whom, is left as a secondary issue. Although Phoenix sees itself as a driving force for a large percentage of both money and control, and is lobbying for that position.

Chairman Stapley said, "I think the legislature will address this question and (depending on election results) could ultimately resolve the issue in our favor."

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Continuing discussion revealed a propensity for the corridors as a backup measure but the overriding sentiment was for the County to declare itself as the standard bearer and the Board of Supervisors as the only regionally elected governing body. It was felt that the County, through the action of the Board and MCDOT, has proven through past documented regional performance and outlook to be the obvious choice over the more parochially invested towns and cities. It was agreed that the resolution of this issue will have to come from the Governor's Office.

Supervisor Brock introduced rail and air transportation into the equation and subsequent discussion ensued but it was decided that this subject is too confrontational for Phoenix to introduce it into the regional transportation question at this time. The Board Members identified a need to set a study session to consider the question of public transportation needs and other modes of transportation in the near future.

Recommendation was made to send a resolution to the Governor, the legislature and to MAG strongly advocating that the County is the most logical entity to plan, implement and build the roads in this region, and that Maricopa County's Board of Supervisors be named as the Regional Transportation Authority Board of Directors. The County's regionally elected governing board is already in place and the County would utilize the services of MCDOT and its annual budget, in part, while still maintaining current responsibilities.

**MEETING ADJOURNED**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

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Don Stapley, Chairman of the Board

ATTEST:

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Fran McCarroll, Clerk of the Board